1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

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tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

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184 991 student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[8]

178 771 776 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expressions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa, mystères,* or *saints,*[9] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa,* but did not make them so they might do evil. 424 425 When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marasa* — the *loa,* the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

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older relatives participate in the rites as at any death; moreover, the rule *gran' moun pas sui' 'ti moun* holds only where a father, mother, grandparent, or older sister or brother is concerned.*

Unless the dead was known to be a sorcerer his house is not abandoned. If, unlike most of his kind, a reputed sorcerer is survived by children, they continue to live in his house, and though no gesture of marked social disapprobation is made, few persons attend the funeral and fewer still put foot inside the house afterwards, which means there is little of the habitual calling on the survivors. An abandoned house of this type is called *caille yun moun lou' gawou*—the house of a werewolf. If a stranger were to buy such a house, he would first have to "restrain" the evil spirits who continued there. Generally, however, a man will not buy land unless a diviner ascertains that no evil beings have ever been associated with it.

Such, in outline, are the principal rites for the dead and the outer manifestations of the sanctions which validate the cult for its followers. Fundamentally, these derive from the power which the dead wield in the world of the living—power that is held to come directly from God, who has not only given the dead all the rights of the living, but also the right to return to earth as ghosts. There are several types of dead, two of these being the *vien-viens* and the *zombi*. The *vien-viens* are ordinary ghosts; the latter, who will be discussed in the next chapter, are those whose souls have been "sold" by sorcerers and are therefore doomed to wander the earth until their destined time arrives to return to God. Still another type of dead are the ghosts of children who die before baptism, called *lutins*, who ride young horses, so that when a wild colt with a tangled mane is seen, it is said that a *lutin* has been on his back. The souls of the dead are held first to go to God in the sky, where they are condemned to purgatory or hell or permitted to remain in paradise; "It is God who creates, therefore when someone dies, he returns to Him." And as for the effect of pur-

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from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth supernatural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gangan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hungan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*, but there is this essential difference between them: the gods of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connaissance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world, while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

857 828 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their [134] tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 427 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[5] A

691 595 423 848 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

5 A [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep
38 their lands. THE HAITIAN PEOPLE once the

175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] [648] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti. The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people, principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work, carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils.*"[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[50] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by then no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry (1827–1843)*

"Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

50. These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51]

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52]

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).			Total: 59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
721	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
		Grand total:	448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.

52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. P. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.

53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.

54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased.

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family?

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present.

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good; but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers, freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants. The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot.

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group.

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman."

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175 657 [652] Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 652 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar [316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island, [425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it, [454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making [465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre- [661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing; there was a swarm [647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une troule. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son empreinte. Il lui donne 838 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.